

## The PREFACE.

and others, who are some of the most considerable in their several Professions. But that that yet farther convinces me of the Real esteem that the more serious part of men have of this Society, is, that several Merchants, men who act in earnest (whose Object is meum & tuum, that great Rudder of humane affairs) have adventur'd considerable sums of Money, to put in practice what some of our Members have contrived, and have continued stedfast in their good opinions of such Indeavours, when not one of a hundred of the vulgar have believed their undertakings feasible. And it is also fit to be added, that they have one advantage peculiar to themselves, that very many of their number are men of Converse and Traffick; which is a good Omen, that their attempts will bring Philosophy from words to action, seeing the men of Business have had so great a share in their first foundation.

And of this kind I ought not to conceal one particular Generosity, which more nearly concerns my self. It is the munificence of Sir John Cutler, in endowing a Lecture for the promotion of Mechanick Arts, to be governed and directed by This Society. This Bounty I mention for the Honourableness of the thing it self, and for the expectation which I have of the efficacy of the Example; for it cannot now be objected to them, that their Designs will be esteemed frivolous and vain, when they have such a real Testimony of the Approbation of a Man that is such an eminent Ornament of this renowned City, and one, who, by the Variety, and the happy Success, of his negotiations, has given evident proofs, that he is not easie to be deceiv'd. This Gentleman has well observ'd, that the Arts of life have been too long imprison'd in the dark shops of Mechanicks themselves, & there hindred from growth, either by ignorance, or self-interest; and he has bravely freed them from these inconveniences. He hath not only oblig'd Tradesmen, but Trade it self. He has done a work that is worthy of London, and has taught the chief City of Commerce in the world the right way how Commerce is to be improv'd. We have already seen many other great signs of Liberality and a large mind, from the same hand: For by his diligence about the Corporation for the Poor; by his honorable Subscriptions for the rebuilding of St. Paul's; by his chearful Disbursement for the replanting of Ireland, and by many other such publick works, he has shewn by what means he indeavours to establish his Memory; and now by this last gift he has done that, which became one of the wisest Citizens

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of our Nation to accomplish, seeing one of the wise Lord Verulam, first propounded it.

But to return to my Subject, from a digression, will pardon me, seeing the Example is so rare that digressions. If these my first Labours shall be arising men, I must attribute the encouragement and praiseworthy Reverend and Learned Person, of whom this I mention. That there is scarce any one Invention, which has not been introduc'd in our Age, but it has some way or other found out his assistance. My Reader, I believe, will quickly guess at the persons that I mean. He is indeed a man born for the glory and the honour of his Country. In the sweetness of his temper, calmness of his mind, in the unbounded goodness of his heart, an evident Instance, what the true and the primitive Philosophy was, before it was sowred by particular Factions. His bounty has been so constant and effectual in advancing the Mechanick Arts, that as one of the Antient Romans said of Scipio, that God that he was a Roman; because wherever he went, there had been the seat of the Empire of the world. So that Dr. Wilkins was an Englishman, for wherever he went, there had been the chief Seat of generous Knowledge. To the truth of this, there are so many worthy Testimonies, that I am confident, what I have here said, will be approved by any ingenious Reader, as a Panegyrick, but more as a Testimony.

By the Advice of this Excellent man I first set out, but I still came to it with much Reluctancy, because I was so eminent a Person as Dr. Wren, who was the chief thing of this nature; whose original draughts do now adorn the monuments of that great Collection of Rarities in the Kingdom of London, which his first beginnings of this kind have reduced to the most famous place of the world, did not so much deter me from the hazard of coming after Dr. Wren did affright me; that, since the time of Archimedes, there scarce ever